

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Write an essay about a time when you helped another person.

The information in the box below will help you remember what you should think about when you write your composition.

REMEMBER—YOU SHOULD

- ☐ write about the assigned topic
- ☐ make your writing thoughtful and interesting
- ☐ make sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole
- ☐ make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow
- ☐ write about your ideas in depth so that the reader is able to develop a good understanding of what you are saying
- ☐ proofread your writing to correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

The names of individuals mentioned in the compositions have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the students whose responses appear in this guide.

SCORE POINT 1

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS AN INEFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- ☐ Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are not focused. The writer may shift abruptly from idea to idea, making it difficult for the reader to understand how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- ☐ The composition as a whole has little, or no, sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion, if present, may be perfunctory.
- ☐ A substantial amount of writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition. In some cases, the composition overall may be only weakly connected to the prompt.

Organization

- ☐ The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph is not logical. Sometimes weak progression results from an absence of transitions or from the use of transitions that do not make sense. At other times, the progression of thought is simply not evident, even if appropriate transitions are included.
- ☐ An organizational strategy is not evident. The writer may present ideas in a random or haphazard way, making the composition difficult to follow.
- ☐ Wordiness and/or repetition may stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ☐ The writer presents one or more ideas but provides little or no development of those ideas.
- ☐ The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, this development is so general or vague that it prevents the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.
- ☐ The writer presents only a plot summary of a published piece of writing, a movie, or a television show.
- ☐ The writer omits information, which creates significant gaps between ideas. These gaps prevent the reader from clearly understanding those ideas.

Voice

- ☐ The writer does not engage the reader, therefore failing to establish a connection.
- ☐ There may be little or no sense of the writer's individual voice. The composition does not sound authentic or original. The writer is unable to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- ☐ There is little or no evidence in the composition that the writer can correctly apply the conventions of the English language. Severe and/or frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure may cause the writing to be unclear or difficult to read. These errors weaken the composition by causing an overall lack of fluency.
- ☐ The writer may misuse or omit words and phrases and may frequently write awkward sentences. These weaknesses interfere with the effective communication of ideas.

I'm going to tell you about some times that I have helped other people in my life that are different way to help them out not only physically but also mentally or in many other ways.

I have help lots of people like at H-E-B or Wal-Mart and many other places some are more important than others but I have also help my-
self in lots of ways I've helped my cousin move from house to house or to push a car from the middle of the highway or helped my mom in the house or helping a new student get better in a school or when I have helped my dad in his job, it feel good to help someone and it is good to help someone that needs to be helped because when you need it they will help you to not like you helped them but some how some way they will help you out any time you need it like my cousin help move house helped me get gas for my car that left me with out gas.

Those are time that I have helped someone in my life I have also helped lots of more people I just don't remember it feels good to help other people out than not to

Score Point 1

The writer of this ineffective response attempts to discuss helping other people but does not provide an overarching thesis that links all the ideas together. The development remains vague and general (I have helped lots of people like at HEB or Wal-Mart and many other places. Some are more important than others), and an organizational strategy is not evident as the writer presents ideas in a random list. In addition, the variety and density of conventions errors interfere with the effective communication of ideas.

When I help my friends or my mother, then and I would feel a little bit at ease. They would know that I have been through the exact same thing. It may strike as odd because I am the person that really doesn't care but it really isn't that odd. I am a great listener and a helper when they need someone for advise. Even though I help my friends and mother all the time, they are also helping me through my times. People may label me as goth, loner, or emo but if they get the chance to get to know me, I could easily be their friend and help them through their problems. Many don't see it at first but I help a lot of people through harsh times and that I would be happy to help anyone.

Score Point 1

In this ineffective response the writer focuses on helping others and how they help the writer. The development remains vague and general (It may strike as odd because I am the person that really doesn't care, but it really isn't that odd. I could easily be their friend and help them through their problems), preventing the reader from clearly understanding what the writer is attempting to communicate.

I help a lot of people every day by being a role model. I help people with knowing right from wrong. For example I try my best to be respectful to everybody I come to know of. When one of my friends were struggling in history I took time out of my weekend to help her get ready for this big test had on Monday. Another example was when my brother was in trouble I step in and took the blame so he could go to a friend's birthday party the next day and that's some of the things brothers do for each other. There was this time when a person lost her bag and of course there was so I had to make a choice do I keep the bag all to my self or do I return it and I did the right thing. I was offered a reward but I turned it down because I didn't think it was a big deal at the time. I

give the bag back to because
it was the right thing to
do.

Score Point 1

In this ineffective composition the writer begins with the idea that he has helped people every day by being a role model. He then proceeds to present three examples of when he has helped people; however, the composition is not focused because the writer does not connect those examples to his original thesis. In addition, the development of the three examples remains general, and numerous conventions errors disrupt the communication of ideas.

Helping People is one of the Greatest things you can do. I'm the Type of Person that loves helping People. But when I help People out the most is when it comes to Playin Soccer. I once helped one of my teammates out alot. he was a good Player but he had lots of Problems. he had Problems with his family, at School, and sometimes had Problems Playin Soccer. I first had a talk with him, we talked about all his Problems and told him I would help him out. So I started helpin him study for his classes. he had to Pass his classes because I wanted him to Graduate and I wanted him to Play Soccer. Then I helped him with his Problems at home. Then we got to the Soccer Part and I actually taught him how to Play better. well he ended up Graduating and Getting a scholarship to a pretty good college.

Score Point 1

The writer of this ineffective composition focuses on helping a friend with family, school, and soccer. However, weak sentence-to-sentence movement stalls the progression of ideas. In addition, the development of ideas remains general and vague (he had lots of problems, started helping him study for his classes, I helped him with his problems at home).

SCORE POINT 2

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- ☐ Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are somewhat focused. The writer may shift quickly from idea to idea, but the reader has no difficulty understanding how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- ☐ The composition as a whole has some sense of completeness. The writer includes an introduction and conclusion, but they may be superficial.
- ☐ Some of the writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- ☐ The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph may not always be smooth or completely logical. Sometimes the writer needs to strengthen the progression by including more meaningful transitions; at other times the writer simply needs to establish a clearer link between ideas.
- ☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses do not enable the writer to present ideas effectively.
- ☐ Some wordiness and/or repetition may be evident; but these weaknesses do not completely stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ☐ The writer attempts to develop the composition by listing ideas or briefly explaining them. In both of these cases, the development remains superficial, limiting the reader's understanding and appreciation of the writer's ideas.
- ☐ The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, there is little evidence of depth of thinking because this development may be somewhat general, inconsistent, or contrived.
- ☐ The writer may omit small pieces of information that create minor gaps between ideas. However, these gaps do not prevent the reader from understanding those ideas.

Voice

- ☐ There may be moments when the writer engages the reader but fails to sustain the connection.
- ☐ Individual paragraphs or sections of the composition may sound authentic or original, but the writer has difficulty expressing his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- ☐ Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure throughout the composition may indicate a limited control of conventions. Although these errors do not cause the writing to be unclear, they weaken the overall fluency of the composition.
- ☐ The writer may include some simple or inaccurate words and phrases and may write some awkward sentences. These weaknesses limit the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

A time when I really helped somebody out was when I tutored somebody three days in a row over material in Algebra II. They were sick with the flu and was out of school for a full 5 days. When he returned that following Monday he was so lost and we had a test over everything on Thursday. He first asked the teacher for all the work and assignments he missed and asked her for help and she told him she only tutors in the morning from 6:45 to 7:20 a.m. on Mondays, Thursday in Fridays. When I figured that out he came and asked me could I stay with him after school in the library to help him on all the work and at first I didn't want to but I said yes. We stayed after school until like 4:30 each day and actually worked. Come test time he said he was fully prepared and his grade didn't lie. He was an 85% on the test and when he got it, he showed me and that made me feel really good.

Score Point 2

In this somewhat effective response, the writer discusses tutoring another student in Algebra II. Although some specific information is presented (sick with the flu and was out of school for a full 5 days; she only tutors in the morning from 6:45 to 7:20 AM on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays; an 85% on the test), the overall development remains superficial. While there are some conventions errors, they do not cause the writing to be unclear.

Have you ever helped someone in any way? Well helping someone sometimes may be a very big challenge. Helping someone can also have a big impact on your life too. You may feel good about yourself afterwards and you may feel proud because someone asked for your help.

I remember helping my friend when she was in a bad situation. I eventually helped her a lot and she says that my help changed her life.

It was a day that we were in school and she looked very sad and down. I had never seen her that way. I asked her what was wrong, at first she wouldn't tell me but I had to push her until she did. She told me, "it's weird". I told her well maybe I can help you. She looked at me and said, "It's just boy problems, it's not a big deal." I just sat and looked at her until she had the strength to tell me. I guess if I was in her situation too I would be really confused. Once I helped her out and gave her advice she thanked me and said youv a great friend.

Ever since I helped out my friend I felt really good about myself and felt that just by a little conversation that you have with someone can really change that persons life and mine as well.

Score Point 2

The writer of this somewhat effective response focuses on helping a friend with boy problems. Although the sentence-to-sentence movement is not always smooth, the progression of ideas does not completely stall. In addition, the development is superficial, limiting the reader's understanding of what the writer is attempting to say.

Well a time I helped a person was
with his car. I remember it was
a Sunday morning and This guy who I met
at "Pep Boys" called me. The guy's name was
Austin, and Austin had the same car I did
which was a Honda Prelude Si. So that
Sunday morning he asked if I could work on
his engine and clean it to make it look
nicer so I agreed to help him by telling
him to come over to my house. When
he got there I open the hood and saw
the engine all rusted and greasy, so I
said to my self I am never going to
be able to do anything to fix this. Then
suddenly I got an Idea and told him
to buy a special paint and we and
take some parts of and fix the problem
so we bought a flat red spray can
and a chrome one. While I took everything
apart he was cleaning the lines and
I was just frustrated cause I didn't
if the paint was going to work but finally
I took it apart and sanded and prime all
the parts and started painting it all look
good and finally we put everything back together.

and it looked like a new engine
you couldn't even tell I painted it it
looked so good that it felt really good
inside of me and Austin wanted almost
to cry and was happy and that's what
made me feel even better.

Score Point 2

In this somewhat effective composition, the writer focuses on helping a friend restore a car engine. Although the narrative progresses and the writer's voice is evident, the development remains superficial. In addition, an inconsistent control of sentence boundaries weakens the overall fluency of the response.

Helping others is a very important key in life. I like to help others, and others like to help me. I go by the old saying "To receive help you have to give help." Helping is also a basis for many people's lives.

In the seventh grade I had a friend who struggled in school. Everyday he came to school knowing that he was going to have trouble that day. One day I was talking to him in lunch and I asked him if he wanted me to help him, and he said no. I didn't give up my hopes yet, so I asked him again later that day and he surprisingly said yes.

The second time I met up with him I was helping him with his math homework. This went on for weeks until he improved. And one day, he all of a sudden just clicked and started making good grades. From then on out I no longer had to help him and he didn't need to help.

Knowing I helped someone made me feel good inside, but knowing the way he felt must be equivalent to mine. Helping others in need can be life-changing, or vis-versa, you getting help can also be. Ever since seventh grade I have helped many people and many people have helped me.

Score Point 2

The writer of this somewhat effective composition presents the thesis that helping others is important and that if you help others, they will help you. The writer then focuses on helping a friend who was struggling in school. The development remains superficial, and the repetition of ideas (I like to help others, and others like to help me; I have helped many people and many people have helped me) slows, but does not completely stall, the overall progression of the composition.

SCORE POINT 3

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A GENERALLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- ☐ Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are, for the most part, focused. The writer generally shows the clear relationship between ideas, making few sudden shifts from one idea to the next.
- ☐ The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion add some depth to the composition.
- ☐ Most of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- ☐ The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and the links between ideas are logical.
- ☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses are generally effective.
- ☐ Wordiness and/or repetition, if present, are minor problems that do not stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ☐ The writer attempts to develop all the ideas included in the composition. Although some ideas may be developed more thoroughly and specifically than others, the development overall reflects some depth of thought, enabling the reader to generally understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- ☐ The writer's presentation of some ideas may be thoughtful. There may be little evidence that the writer has been willing to take compositional risks when developing the topic.

Voice

- ☐ The writer engages the reader and sustains that connection throughout most of the composition.
- ☐ For the most part, the composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is generally able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- ☐ The writer generally demonstrates a good command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Although the writer may make minor errors, they create few disruptions in the fluency of the composition.
- ☐ The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses are generally appropriate and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

I believe that one of the most rewarding times that I have ever helped anyone came when my friend Selena asked me for help learning her flute scales for a band tryout.

Selena and I are both flute players in our high school band. After marching season, the band director splits the band into two smaller bands, one of which will go to Concert and Sightreading contest. The way the band director splits the band is by playing off a few major scales, which in this case was the Chromatic, B^b, E^b, A^b, F, and C scales. Selena was a bit nervous about playing off some of the scales, especially the Chromatic Scale. She was nervous because some of the scales went up to some very high notes for a flute player. So she decided to come to me for help. I accepted and we decided to stay after school a few days a week to work on her scales.

We started out at the bottom, literally, with a low C concert pitch and worked our way up. There were some notes I had to show her how to finger. But eventually she became very comfortable with the notes and with some help and hard work was able to learn her Chromatic and other scales. But Selena was still a bit nervous about playing off her newly learned scales to the band director. But with a little encouragement from me and her friends Selena was able to play off her scales

and make the contest band as forth chair out of nine flute players. And in truth, Selena was one of only a handful of band members that did not have to play off her scales in front of the entire band.

I believe that even a small amount of help and encouragement can do wonders for a person's self-esteem. It did for Selena. And as for me, it was an amazing experience knowing what I did helped make a huge difference for my friend.

Score Point 3

Using a personal narrative approach, the writer describes helping a friend work on scales to earn a spot as fourth-chair flute in their school's contest band. The progression of thought is generally smooth and controlled as the writer describes the friend's nervousness, the difficulty of chromatic scales, and the renewed self-esteem that came from practicing. In addition, a good command of conventions contributes to the fluency of the response, helping to make it generally effective.

Helping someone is considered one of the most intimate and kind things to do. When an individual reaches out to someone in need, it says a lot about their character. Whether it's helping someone with their homework, or even helping someone get through an addiction problem, it all equally balances out, and considered HELP.

When I was much younger, I was approached with the problem that my sister had. I always wondered why she looked so different from me and the other kids in my class. I was soon to discover that my sister was born differently. She was special and needed more care than the other kids in my class. My sister was born with a deformation of her legs and left arm.

As we both grew older, I began to realize many of the struggles she had to deal with from something as simple as getting a glass of water was a major conflict for her. I began to realize that I need to reach out to Amber and help her with anything I could. It was hard for Amber to grow up with a sibling who was healthy and considered "normal." Amber was everything that I wasn't. She's brave, incredibly intelligent, courageous and stubborn. Amber could never be told no.

Amber has taught me so much about life and to not take the little things for granted. It brings great

joy to my heart knowing I helped Amber with her "small" struggles in life. She lets me know everyday that I am such a caring and compassionate person. Through Amber I have not only helped her with daily tasks, but I have given her a spark in her eye that will always be determined to keep trying harder and that if she EVER needs me, I'm there to give her a helping hand.

Score Point 3

The writer of this response chooses a reflective approach to write about a sister born with disabilities. The thoughtful tone is consistent throughout the composition, revealing some depth of thought. A good command of conventions enhances the communication of ideas. In addition, the clear focus and unique perspective of the student make this composition generally effective.

The nature of a human being is a very social one. Sometimes it drive a person to do things against moral fibers, such as stealing, blowing a life savings, or even getting typosuckichen. But then again it can drive people to give an arm and a leg for a complete stranger because it's the right thing to do.

It even drove me to nearly give up my kidney to some kid from another state. It was about 5 years back and my mom had just gotten a job at the hospital. So as usual she had to work hard and kiss up to everyone above her in the hospital. Even though there wasn't many, one of them just had to have a brother, who just had to have a new kidney. But to top it all off he had to be the same blood type that I was, which just happened to be very rare. Thanks Mom for mentioning that to Doctor Lopez that had the kids blood types.

About three days later Dr. Lopez invited me to his place to try and convince my to give up my kidney. Ha, like that was going to happen. But something happened while that willy doctor was talking to me. But about halfway through he convinced me to give a kidney for someone I didn't even know. Then he said "I'm so glad your going to do this." the look of pure gratefulness in his eyes right then and there was enough to melt the ice of an iceberg.

So for the next couple of weeks I was being prepared for the surgery. It was the night before the

Surgery and man was I having second thoughts why was I doing this? I didn't even know this kid. Then it arrived. During the last day I would have my kidney. As they rolled me into the operation room. And just as if sent from the heavens Dr. Lopez burst through the doors yelling "Stop the procedure!" He informed the surgeon that they had found a better match and wouldn't need my kidney. As soon as he said that I was out of that hospital at Mock 5 speed.

But to think I was willing to give up an organ for someone I didn't know just because it was the right thing to do still blows my mind till this day.

Score Point 3

In this response the writer discusses almost giving a kidney to a stranger "just because it was the right thing to do." The writer remains focused and progresses through time from Mom getting a new job at the hospital to meeting with the doctor and agreeing to donate a kidney. The composition reflects some depth of thought as the writer explains the strong emotions, the relief when the surgery is called off, and the amazement after the fact. Although there are some errors in conventions, they create few disruptions in the fluency of this generally effective response.

Dough. Grab it. Dock it. Toss it. Throw it in the pan. The machine buzzes; another ticket. Large - two topping - pepperoni and extra cheese. Grab the pan. Sauce, two scoops. Spread it, spin it. Cheese, five ounces on bottom, nine on top. Spread it, spin it. Pepperonis on a large two topping? Three ounces. Lay 'em out. Throw on the top cheese. Into the oven.

Making pizza doesn't seem like a very important job. I probably won't save any lives, or make the world a better place to live in. I'm pretty sure I won't invent anything to make people's lives easier. I won't put out fires, or lock up criminals. I probably won't have to fight for my country or take care of the sick. But I do help people, in what little way I can.

When someone calls the Pizza Parlor on Main Street, that person is usually pretty hungry. I help him out by making him a pizza, just the way he likes it. Maybe he wants a Supreme with no onions and extra cheese. Sure thing, we'll have it out to you in under thirty minutes. Maybe he has a wife. I can help her out, too. Turns out she's a vegan. I'll make her a small vegetarian pizza and a large garden salad. Got two kids? Okay. One likes pepperoni and the other doesn't? Alright, I'll make a large, half pepperoni-half cheese, pizza, and throw in some cinnamon sticks for dessert.

I help people every day that I work. I'll

never see their face when they open the box, and I'll never get a "Thanks!" from a satisfied customer. But I'm happy knowing that I help keep people happy and full, and that's all the thanks I need. Well, that and my paycheck.

Score Point 3

This generally effective response is focused on how the writer's pizza-making helps keep people full and happy. Beginning the composition with the pizza-making process, the writer makes the case that even though this activity doesn't save lives or make the world a better place, providing people with the pizza they like is definitely a helpful service. The writer engages the reader throughout the composition, and the organizational strategy is generally effective. The conventions are appropriate, and the development reflects some depth of thought.

SCORE POINT 4

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- ☐ Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are focused. This sustained focus enables the reader to understand and appreciate how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- ☐ The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion are meaningful because they add depth to the composition.
- ☐ Most, if not all, of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- ☐ The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is smooth and controlled. The writer's use of meaningful transitions and the logical movement from idea to idea strengthen this progression.
- ☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses enhance the writer's ability to present ideas clearly and effectively.

Development of Ideas

- ☐ The writer's thorough and specific development of each idea creates depth of thought in the composition, enabling the reader to truly understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- ☐ The writer's presentation of ideas is thoughtful or insightful. The writer may approach the topic from an unusual perspective, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or make interesting connections between ideas. In all these cases, the writer's willingness to take compositional risks enhances the quality of the content.

Voice

- ☐ The writer engages the reader and sustains this connection throughout the composition.
- ☐ The composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- ☐ The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition. The writer demonstrates a consistent command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. When the writer attempts to communicate complex ideas through sophisticated forms of expression, he/she may make minor errors as a result of these compositional risks. These types of errors do not detract from the overall fluency of the composition.
- ☐ The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses enhance the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

slowly I walked into a large brown building on the corner of two bustling streets in Downtown Dallas. Nervousness filled me. This was the first time that I had ever stepped into a food kitchen. I entered the building as a volunteer with no absolutely no idea of what to expect.

I had stumbled upon volunteer work by complete accident the week before. While reading the newspaper, I came across a volunteer page that advertised local community service opportunities. On a whim, I decided to call the soup kitchen. Primarily, I was looking for a good extracurricular activity to put on my college resume. However, little did I know that I would learn so much about myself and my community.

When I reached the soup kitchen, the founder warmly greeted me. He described his mission to give those less fortunate a steady meal and a way to "get back on their feet." The founder then placed me on a task. My job was to start filling plates with mashed potatoes when the clock struck eleven.

Eleven 'o' clock came and hungry people lined up at the door. I began serving the people. Everyone was so cordial and thankful I was glad that I could help even in the slightest of ways. After all the potatoes had been piled on the plastic plates, I began picking up the dirty trays.

As I was picking up one lady's plate, she began to tell me how thankful she was for the hot meal. She had recently moved to Dallas from New Orleans because of hurricane Katrina. Although she tried extensively to get a job, she had

to find a vocation. She described the difficulty of starting over. The storm destroyed her home and she had little life savings. She explained to me the importance of the meal that the soup kitchen provides to her. She spoke of her dream to one day have her own home again and help her children finish school. The kind woman thanked me for my positive attitude and the help I supplied the soup kitchen.

I then realized the importance of small acts of kindness. Even though I helped the soup kitchen, I felt that I made a difference in at least one person's life. Because of the change I made in the life of another, I vowed to return to the soup kitchen as often as I can. I try to donate my time at least twice a month to help my community become a better place.

Score Point 4

The writer of this highly effective response describes volunteering in a soup kitchen and the lasting effect of the experience. The response is focused, and the progression of thought is smooth and controlled. The conclusion (I then realized the importance of small acts of kindness) and consistent reflective tone contribute to the depth of the composition. In addition, the strength of the conventions adds to the overall effectiveness of the response.

"Ava, not again!" This is a phrase I've used numerous times throughout my school days. Ava isn't exactly the brightest crayon in the box when it comes to remembering things. Especially, when it comes to getting her retainer out of that Sonic bag she stuck it in so she won't lose it. If you were to ask her she'd say in these exact words, "Dude, Jessica is the freakin' greatest, she's saved my life."

It all started back in sixth grade, Ms. Fitzgerald's class. Me and Ava were normally best friends and inseparable except for this particular day. We got into a small argument of some kind at lunch and she decided to squirt red Kool-Aid in my bleach blonde hair. I looked like I was a clown straight out of the circus. Me and Ava had 5th period together, and class had started but Ava hadn't showed up yet. I was at the board doing the DoL when someone knocked at the door. Ava walked in crying telling Ms. Fitzgerald how she had accidentally thrown her retainer away during lunch and the janitors had already emptied the trash cans into the dumpster. I had just gotten seated back at my desk when the teacher conveniently chose me to go help her dig for her retainer. I infuriatedly got out of my chair and walked out the classroom door. We walked in complete silence to the cafeteria. That silence broke though when we saw how funny each other looked in the aprons and gloves we had to wear. We nearly had to climb completely in the dumpster to pull out trash in little piles at a time to look for this stupid thing. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack! After a couple of hours of rummaging through the disgusting filth, we had finally come across the beloved piece of plastic. Yes, I helped her save her parents a couple hundred dollars, but also somewhere in between the time we got in the dumpster and got out we had managed to

send our amity back to normal. Don't get me wrong, I was still pretty sore about the fact I no longer had blonde hair but more of a washed out pink, and now I smelled as if I hadn't taken a bath in weeks. Put all of that aside though, nothing can beat the feeling of accomplishment that you get after you help out someone in desperate need, especially when they are your best friend.

I am now a junior in highschool. I can proudly, or not so proudly, say I've dug in a total of two dumpsters and three trashcans so far in my life. Even though we weren't getting along I still did the right thing in helping her. Something you do to help someone may not seem like it's much to you but to them it would mean the world. Digging in the trash isn't my favorite thing to do but for a friend I could make an exception.

Score Point 4

In this thoroughly and specifically developed personal narrative, the writer recalls an incident from 6th grade when she dug through a dumpster with her best friend to help find a retainer. The writer moves smoothly from her initial irritation with her friend to a reflection on how the experience strengthened their friendship. Effective use of descriptive language (After a couple of hours of rummaging through the disgusting filth, we had finally come across the beloved piece of plastic) contributes to the communication of ideas and adds a sense of authenticity.

Jefferey was just as ordinary as any other rat on the block. Since the day ^{he was} cast out into the world alone, he knew he was destined to live off of the filth of the city. His average meal consisted of pizza crusts soggy with rain water, the cardboard boxes he found them in, and, on good days, a rogue piece of olive or bell pepper. Jefferey lived a cursed life of itchy fury and the stench of the sewers. But one night, he decided ^{that} it was time to live a life of luxury. Thanksgiving had arrived, and Jeffery had a plan.

Every holiday, the Fillingsworth manor became a sight like no other. From all over the city, the Fillingsworth family gathered to stuff their gullets with the finest meats and foreign delicacies. This night was no different as the aroma of roasted pig floated into every room of the manor. Every rat in town gathered outside to smell the aroma and dream of what the Fillingsworth feast might taste like. But Jefferey was tired of dreaming. He climbed his way atop a stone gargoyle where everyone could see.

"Listen up, rats!" he shouted. They all looked up in confusion. "How often do we make a pilgrimage here, only to have our dreams denied? How many hours of each day do we long for a life of luxurious foods? My fellow rats, I say that our days of dreaming are over!"

Now everyone was eager to find out what on Earth Jeffery was talking about. The other rats had never even considered having a

luxurious feast.

"It is time for us to team up," Jeffery continued, "get inside the Fillingsworth manor, and have the night of our lives!" Now the area was filled with uproar.

"Bah!" retorted Gus, the rat from the alley behind Dragon Hunan, "there's no way we're gettin' in there! We're too small to open the windows or the door!"

"That's exactly our problem," explained Jefferey. "As individuals, we are far too small, but if we stack on top of each other, we can easily reach the door nob."

The local rats, having no proper education, had never thought of such an idea, but everyone became determined that it would work. And so the rats tried, and tried, and tried over again. The door nob would not budge. Just as everyone was about to give up, Bruce, the largest and strongest rat in town, demanded that he was allowed to try. In one final attempt, the rats stacked. Despite their struggle to support Bruce's weight, he reached the top. With every ounce of strength he could find, Bruce forced the nob to turn. The Gates of Heaven were now open.

The rats rushed into the manor at full speed. The Fillingsworth family, having been caught completely by surprise by the hoard of rats, fled in terror. The rats had the night of their lives and owned the entire manor for many more years. This would have never been accomplished if they didn't help each other.

Score Point 4

In this highly effective response, the writer develops a fictional tale about a group of rats that accomplishes the impossible by working together and helping one another. The composition is thoroughly and specifically developed. The effective word choice and dialogue (the Fillingsworth family gathered to stuff their gullets with the finest meats and foreign delicacies; "How often do we make a pilgrimage here, only to have our dreams denied?") further enhance the development and contribute to the clear communication of ideas.

A single helping hand can be more life changing than one might think. Close your eyes and picture yourself as a useless teen rotting away in the summer sun. You have a summer job as a lifeguard, but you are still a drain on society because you basically get paid to watch immature children with less education than you. Do you feel worthless yet? This is how I felt last summer.

Focused on the slow molasses-like clock that relieved me from my agonizing shift, I felt my skin decay from the wrath of the sun. It was my second year as a lifeguard, so being less important than the sunscreen on my back was as familiar as my own name. I find myself dozing off as the icy droplets of water from the splashing children down below me seem to penetrate my skin. The relaxing sensation of the limited water drops is only a mirage taunting me throughout my almost endless shift. I glance at the clock, but doubletake on my mind processes the time. Unaware of the hour hand, I notice the minute hand has reached the ten, which marks the beginning of Adult Swim. Blowing my whistle and yelling "Adult Swim!" was the key that unlocked the gate to my prison cell. I climb down from the stand and walk towards the guard room unaware of the exiting patrons, but halt at a faint "gurgle" sound. Instantly, my eyes dart toward the water after I hear someone shriek the word "Help!"

After seeing an "Active drowning victim," as lifeguard instructors call it, I instantly activate our E.A.P. (Emergency Action Plan) by blowing three staccato whistle blasts. Without thinking I grab the rescue tube and enter the deep end using the Stride Jump. The high level of adrenaline combined with my intense lifeguard training enable me to act instinctively. I reach the face

down, currently "Passive drowning victim," and flip him over using one of the three professional techniques.

I escort the victim to the wall as I call for a backboard. I pin the victim against the wall as instructed in class and a fellow lifeguard grabs the victim's wrists. I exit the water and grab the backboard. I hear the word "Right" and submerge the backboard on the right side of the assisting lifeguard. We flip the victim on to the board and pull the backboard and victim to land. After ensuring that my gloves are on and E.M.S. has been called, I begin checking for signs of circulation. There were no signs of circulation or breathing, so I give two rescue breaths to make sure there is no obstruction. I see the chest rise and immediately begin counting chest compressions, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5..." followed by two more breaths.

Near the end of my fourth cycle of C.P.R. chest compressions the victim shows a sign of life by coughing up water. I check for circulation and am relieved to find a pulse and breathing. I flip the victim to recovery position and check the signs constantly until E.M.S. arrives. Moments later an ambulance appears and takes over. I have saved a life!

I learned a very important lesson that day; even the most unrecognized and seemingly helpless citizen can save a life! Never lose your guard, because everyone needs help from time-to-time and you might be the one to save a life!

Score Point 4

In this highly effective composition, the writer recounts a memorable experience as a lifeguard. The progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is smooth and controlled (I hear someone shriek the word "Help!" After seeing an "Active drowning victim," as lifeguard instructors call it...). Specific details provide depth of thought, and each sentence contributes to this highly engaging essay. Sophisticated and varied sentence structure enhances the overall communication of ideas.